THE FIFTH DAY.

Friday, the 1st March 1929.

The Assemby met again at 11-30 A. M. on Friday, the 1st March 1929

59. Education.

MR. R. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Member, Vilavancode taluk*) prefaced his representation by criticising the attitude of a European Director of Public Instruction who had thought it fit to defame all Indians by condemning them as wanting in "intellectual backbone," and of another officer of the Education Department, also a foreigner, who declared that there were no men of "authentic eminence" in Travancore.

He urged the need for making primary education compulsory. If that was not possible, it should be made a rule that a parent or a guardian when he put a child to the lowest class in an elementary school should undertake to keep that child in school until he completed his elementary education and contraventions of such undertakings should be penalised.

The following holidays *viz.*, the Malabar New Year Day, Swargavathal Ekadasi, Sivarathri, Makaraponkal, Mattuponkal, Makaravavu Orikkal, Karkadakavavu Orikkal and Adi Aruthi should be transferred from the B list to the A list of holidays for the Education Department. These holidays could, if necessary, be made up for by making a corresponding reduction in the mid-summer vacation. In addition to the above, the Vrischikashtami in Vilavancode, the Arattu day at Thiruvattar, and the Meenabharani at Kollancode should be declared as local holidays in those places.

The gradation list of teachers recently issued by Government was defective in several respects. Government had fixed the ranks of teachers in accordance with their pay. The pay depended upon whether they had undergone training or not. But it was well known that candidates for training were for a long time past selected at random without any method or principle. The result was that many teachers of long service remained untrained and hence on a lower pay, while their juniors were selected for training and got a higher pay. The present gradation list had only perpetuated this injustice. The grievances caused by this list to individual teachers should be carefully enquired into and remedied.

There were now not less than nine High Schools without permanent Head-masters. It was a long time since these places fell vacant. The Director should take up the question at a very early date. If he could not deal with it soon, he might take the assistance of a committee and dispose of the question

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Under the present fee concession rules, pupils were divided into two classes, those belonging to 'forward' and those belonging to 'backward' communities. Nairs, Christians and Brahmins were treated as 'forward' communities. There were, however, many Christians in South Travancore who were really not 'forward'. So also, there was a rule that only 10 per cent of the pupils belonging to the 'forward' classes should be given fee concession. In a class having 18 Nayar pupils, for example, 2 alone were eligible for fee concession, though there were several others who were really poor and stood in need of help. Again whether a pupil was rich or poor depended on the report of the Proverthicar who was the enquiring officer. If he was not pleased, a poor man would easily become rich. Another defect about the rules was that with the partition of *Tarwads*, many Nayar families had become poor, but the rules did not contemplate this situation. Government should therefore revise the rules and order that all poor pupils of whatever community should be given fee concessions. Provision should also be made for checking the malpractices among the Proverthicars.

The standard of the Malayalam Readers prescribed for classes i, ii, iii and iv was very high. In the first Reader, for instance, the child was started on such complex letters as ൻ, ട etc. occurring in the words മൻമ, and കൺമണി. The books prescribed for the primary classes should not be those written by great scholars but those written by persons who had experience of and insight into the minds of children. The books written by members of the Text Book Committees should not be prescribed as texts.

The pleadership class should be abolished as early as practicable.

Travancore history and geography should in future be prescribed for optional study in the School Final Class. In order to remedy the want of any standard book on Travancore history, a competent man should be deputed to write such a book and it should be prescribed for study.

It was reported that the Director of Public Instruction had recommended the abolition of the posts of Chief Inspector of Vernacular Schools and Inspector of English Schools. If there was any truth in this report, it was very undesirable. Government should carefully scrutinise this proposal and turn it down.

Teachers of vernacular schools should be given a pay of at least Rs. 20 per mensem. Last time when the Director of Public Instruction spoke on the subject in the Legislative Council, he hinted at a scheme to enhance the school fees with a view to providing funds for the additional expenditure necessary on this account. Government should not countenance any such proposal which was sure to bear hard on the people.

Government should hold out particular inducements to authors writing books on such technical subjects as Natural Science and Political Economy in Malayalam.

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Girl pupils in mixed schools should be given lessons in house-keeping, nursing etc., when the boys were taken out for drill. Early arrangements should be made at least for teaching them spinning during these hours.

Headmasters should be allowed the discretion of fixing the hours of instruction in the various schools with due regard to local conditions. The provisions of the Education Code should not be made to fetter their liberty in this matter. Good clocks should also be provided in all schools.

Anglo-vernacular schools should be established as early as possible.

The Kuzhithura V. M. School building should be renovated. The English High School in the place should be raised to the status of a second grade college. Two grant-in-aid schools should be established one at Arumana and the other at Karinkal.

In mixed schools, waiting rooms and separate latrines should be provided for girl pupils.

Malayalam short-hand should be introduced as an optional subject of study for the English School Leaving Certificate Examination.

Practical training in carpentry, agriculture etc., should be introduced in all schools.

The maintenance of schools which were originally built by the people but subsequently handed over to the Government should be attended to by Government themselves. Compound walls should be provided for all schools, lest the premises of school buildings shcuild be trespassed upon by the neighbouring people.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Narayana Pillai, while you were making some introductory remarks, I felt that they were not entirely in good taste. However, I have completely forgotten them and I think you will do well also to forget them entirely.

Turning to compulsory primary education, the difficulty in Travancore is not so much to compel people to undergo education as to provide schools and means of education. The whole of Travancore by unanimous consent seem to consider it their duty, and I am very happy to find that the tendency exists in the country, to get their children educated. While that commendable spirit exists in the minds of the people of Travancore, I do not think it is necessary to go through the formality of compulsory education. What is universal needs no compulsion.

You referred to defects in the gradation list of teachers recently issued by the Government and you also referred to the delay in the appointment of headmasters in English schools. The two questions are interrelated. The Government had first to determine the proper gradation of schoolmasters so as to see who were in the eligible class for appointment as headmasters. This gradation of teachers was not an easy problem to solve. But the Government enunciated certain

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general principles in accordance with which the Director of Public Instruction has drawn up a gradation list which, although it may occasionally operate to the disadvantage of a particular individual, is on the whole fair and reasonable. Any case of individual hardship is of course deserving of special consideration.

In regard to the appointment of headmasters, I told you it should wait upon fixation of the gradation list. Then another question arises. As you know, the headmasters have to be selected with particular care. A headmaster has a great responsibility for which personal characteristics are often determining factors in the selection. The present Director when he took over charge asked me to give him some time to make the personal acquaintance of the suitable candidates before he made his recommendations. That I consider is a very proper and reasonable request and until such time as would allow of a fair knowledge of all the candidates from which the headmasters will be drawn, the appointments should wait. But I think that will not take long now.

I noticed that the Director of Public Instruction was listening with eager interest to what you said on the point of promotions of teachers of vernacular schools, fee concessions and suggestions for the improvement of vernacular literature and as regards text books. This latter was a very interesting statement that you made and I am sure every body in this Assembly listened like myself with considerable interest to what you had to say with your illustrations of "cats" and "flower pots". I have not the slightest doubt that all these matters will receive the earnest attention of the Director of Public Instruction who will bring up his views to the Government in due course.

60. Encouragement of the study of Sanskrit.

MR. M. K. GOVINDAN (*Member, Nominated*) said that the Sanskrit language and literature were the common treasures of all Indians. All the Shastras, Vedas, and religious books of India were written in that language. In fact the very heart of India was reflected in the Sanskrit language more than in any other. Among the members of the Ruling Family of Travancore there were many Sanskrit scholars and poets. The Government of Travancore had also done much for the preservation of several ancient works in Sanskrit. The Department for the publication of Sanskrit Manuscripts had already brought to light several valuable works. Government should carry the same spirit of patronage of Sanskrit into the administration of the Education Department and afford due encouragement to the spread of Sanskrit education in the country.

To begin with, the rules of the Education Code should be amended with a view to recognising the Sastri and the Upadhyaya tests in Sanskrit as qualifications for the appointment of teachers in vernacular schools. A candidate who had passed the Sastri test possessed a fairly good knowledge of the Sanskrit language, of Sastras like *Tharkam* and *Vyakaranam*, and of history and geography, besides possessing a knowledge of the English language up to the IV Form standard. But

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